environmental aspect. Besides this, fire breaks out in the shipyard as many as four to five times in a year causing death of many people. The Gujarat Maritime Board is unable to curb the fire and the loss which it is causing to environment. Whether the Central Government propose to take any steps to prevent the damage caused to the environment by such fire incidents. Last year several fire incidents took place there. Will you please help us by conducting an enquiry into it ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : As you have raised this question, the angle from which I will look into this subject will be to find out as to which type of break has led to what type of condition of the ship. I cannot stop the Gujarat Maritime Board from proceeding in a particular way. It happened without me. It came to notice in the evening. They have their own Act in this regard. As regards to the question you have raised about repairing the ship, I will look into that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : This is an important question. Instead of five, nine suplementaries have been allowed. Yet I admit the fact that even then everybody is agitated over this. This question has got two aspects. If there is no ship, people are rendered jobless and if there are ships, they create pollution. So far it is only in our knowledge that the matter has neen taken up with Russia and also other countries. I do not know if anyone of them has ever sought any permission? America has got their own laws which prohibits ships from entering there, which is why question of seeking permission rose. My submission is that in view of all these facts, you should formulate a policy in this regard. Better if we hold a half-an-hour discussion on this issue.

[English]

Prawn Cultivation

*182. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Supreme Court in its judgement ordering for closure of prawn cultivation in the coastal States had cited environment as the most important reasons for the closure of the farms ;

(b) whether his Ministry have examined all aspects of this judgement and have taken steps to protect the environment;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As per the directions of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Environment and Forest has constituted the Aquaculture Authority under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 to deal with the situation created by the shrimp culture industry in coastal States and Union Territories. The Authority has been vested with all powers necessary to protect the ecologically fragile coastal areas, sea shore and waterfront.

(d) Does not arise.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Nalanda) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hold that this question is based on the decistion given by the Supreme Court, the copy of which is most probably, in the possesion of the Hon'ble Minister. Therefore, I request him to go through the same to find out that he has answered only one point out of 16 points contained in the decision. The remaining 15 points have not been at all touched by the Minister. I want to know whether the Govt. are likely to accept only one point out of the 16 contained in the Supreme Court Directives and want to ignore the rest of the 15 points.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : No doubt, the matter raised by Shri George Fernandes is of utmost importance. But this is not correct to say that we are taking action only on a single point. Copy of the Directives of the Supreme Court is here before me and we have taken note of the all 16 points. Attaching a lot of importance to its directives, we are making efforts to implement them all. The first point pertains to the constitution of an Authority to look after aquaculture. I would like to let you know that we, after a lot of hard work, have set-up an aquaculture Authority.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : What hard work have you done ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Hard work involves a lot of things including appointment of a deserving Chairman and efficient staff to run the Authority successfully. Anyway, Aquaculture Authority will come into existence very soon.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : When you people can search out Prime Minister like I.K. Gujral, I do not think there should be any problem in searching out a Chairman?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It has got no relevancy, whatsoever, with the question under discussion.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : We have perhaps started taking action on the directives given by the Supreme Court. So far as the first point pertaining to the Aquaculture Authority is concerned, it has been set-up. It has also started functioning. Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : My question was very clear. There are 16 points in the directives of the Supreme Court. The judgement of the Supreme Court is before the able Ministry. It was delivered seven months back. This is the eighth month but still it is not known as to by what time the Government are likely to take action on these points ?

A date has been mentioned, a target date, in the verdict of the Supreme Court. Therefore, give some reply at least in that respect so that I can ask another part of my question which is equally important.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : The Hon. Member is aware that this case is subjudice in the Supreme Court. The Minister of Agriculture are likely to submit their review petition before the court by 20th August. As the dicisions of the Supreme Court and High Court are binding on us, we can not go aginst them. In case implementation of an order given by either the Supreme Court or a High Court is likely to leave any adverse affect on the society, then we generally go back to court and apprise them about the likely ramifications of the implementation. No action therefore, will be taken against the orders passed by the Supreme Court. So let us wait for the final verdict of the Court.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I feel that the Hon'ble Minister is not aware of what is happening in various ministries in the wake of the Supreme Court's verdict. Have you nct tried to undo the decision of the Supreme Court by bringing the legislation in the Rajya Sabha ? Are you not bringing this legislation in this House tomorrow or day after tomorrow ? Even then you are saying to me that you are busy in ensuring the implementation of the directives of the Supreme Court. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister that if this matter was pending as review petition before the Supreme Court then, what was the need to impede the verdict of the Supreme Court by bringing about this leagislation of this Government meant only for the rich end those farmers and fishermen, who are suffering great losses due to prawn farms, could not get any attention of the Government and would the Government not take any measures for full implementation of the Supreme Court's verdict ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : The stand being taken by George Saheb that the Government should not come forward with the Bill, is quite wrong. In fact, our constitution has three organs. This is where we are sitting in legislature. The elected representatives are sitting over here which have the right to make legislation. The honourable Supreme Court or any other court is entrusted with the job of interpreting the law and give its guidence to the Government. Therefore, the agriculture ministry, exercising its own nights has moved this Bill in the Rajya Sabha and the Members would give their opinions on it and then only it would become the law. He has asked this question also as to why the need for it was felt. In fact, it was needed because the Supreme Court had agreed to shrimp cultivators provided it was done through traditional methods or they improved scientifically only then these farms would not be dismantled. But the order had the provision that the S.P. or the D.M. could dismantle these farms. But after the judgement, it was felt that on one hand it would deprive the people from employment opportunities and on the other hand the Ministry of Agriculture in its prayer to Hon'ble Supreme Court had said that Shri Alagise Sami who is considered expert in this field has said in a meeting he had referred to some other reports. He has submitted an application before the Supreme Court, you go through if we dismantle it what would he the repercussions. It is a great issue. I share concerns about the small farmers but I would never say because I am not the Commerce Minister that. You have Govt 3000 crores foreign exchange .....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Should the small people be killed for 3000 rupees.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : I would not say that we also get the foreign exchange. I must say that if they would have been dismantle that way then, one spirit of the Supreme Court's order would have been finished. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture stated that their norms are part of fishing and agriculture. The guidelines they have formulated.

[English]

Sir, I am told that these guidelines are very comprehensive. There can be no pollution if these guidelines are implemented. As a Minister of Environment it is my duty also to protect the coastal lines. I will institute an agency if it is not already there. I have already instructed all the State Pollution Contorl Boards regarding this. This matter of coastal lines was recently examined also by all these States. Those precautions will be taken. But the Ministry of Agriculture is before the hon. Supreme Court explaining the representations from both the sides. As a Minister of Environment, I take the position. I am in the middle. Some people say development is nothing, it is trash and environment is everything, and others come and take an equally opposite stand. We shall have development but not at the cost of environment. We shall protect our environment. But with the modern science and technology, it is possible to have development as also to protect the environment.

As far as the hon. Supreme Court is concerned, I salute the hon. Supreme Court which has a Constitutional position. I cannot go against that. We shall implement the orders. But we shall see what is hapening at the grass root level.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA BOSE : Sir, I would like to know whether the Government is aware of the fact that the European Community had banned all fisheries' products from India. The unhygienic conditions of our fisheries are not only threatening our environment but also threatening our international commerce. Because of the ban by the European Community, we are losing a very huge market. Sir, would the Government take care of what Shri George Fernandes has said just now about the unhygienic condition of these fisheries? Otherwise, we are also going to be threatened in the international market.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : I have no information whether we have lost the market or not. But if the hon. Minister of Agriculture wants to answer this in part he may do so. I do not know about any cultivation of fish, and whether the market has gone down.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You tell of your ministry.

[English]

DR. ASIM BALA : It should come under the Ministry of Agriculture because it is prawn cultivation. ..... *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have already allowed Shri Ram Naik.

.....*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAIK : Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, after the judgement of the Supreme Court and the Bill was passed in Rajya Sabha and the day on which it was debated in Lok Sabha. I had demanded that it is serious soical issue and a committee of M.Ps of Coastal States be constituted to tour all coastal states. I am happy that the Agriculture Minister costituted a committee of 13 M.Ps for this purpose. We toured all the coastal states during 30th June to 17th July and met the Chief Ministers and the Minister of fisheries Ministry.

We met Chief Ministers, Shri Nayanar of the C.P.M., Shri Manohar Joshi of Maharashtra and Shri Rane of Goa and pepple of that area and it was the opinion of the hon. Members by and large that what is going on today should be given protection and therefore, the Bill which was to be introduced here is being delayed. And because of that, no work could be undertaken in the next harvesting season resulting in losses to the tune of crores of rupees. Therefore, I want to know that the Bill which was slated for debate on the first day, when that Bill would be introduced and the role of the Government in this regard. Because of the instability many problems have cropped up and we find that about 85 percent aquaculturists have less than five hectares of land in the country. Here we have discussed about multinationals but is 'Hindustan Lever' the only multinational in West Bengal and there is no other multinational in the country. Therefore, I want to know that this is such an important Bill and it involves employment for lakhs of people and investment of crores of rupees and this is not just like aquaculture industry, however, you consider it as industry whereas it is a part of agriculture. So, my question is that by what time lakhs of labourers would be provided relief by introducing it as soon as possible considering it as a part of agriculture?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as per my information this is likely to be introduced very soon in the House.

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my name is not in the list.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Do you want to ask question or not?

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Should I ask on the same issue ?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : If you don't want to ask should I call other members. Please sit down now.

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I heard the hon. Minister saying that the environment is on one side and the development is on the other extreme side and he is in the middle. But I am sorry to say that we do not agree with that. We find that his own Ministry is taking an extreme line with regard to diciding on evironmental matters. What is needed is a blance between the environmental protection and development. It is possible to have development by protecting the environment. The feeling that any development is against environment should go away. I would say that ther is no human activity which will not affect environment to some extent. Every human activity will affect environment to some extent. So, what is needed is a broad view on how to coordinate between the two and have a compromise on the two so that there is development withour affecting the environment. That is possible in this scientific age. I would like to know that instead of looking at each item or each proposal in isolation, whether your Ministry has a common approach or policy so that the thrust is on development without affecting environment. Why I put this question is because I always find that your thrust is protection of environment at the cost of development. What I want is a different thrust 'development first without affecting the environment'. Are you prepared for this kind of a reorientation of your Ministry?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir, actually what Prof. Kurien has suggested is already there because this Ministry has the charge of organising harmony between development and environment. We have laws to protect the environment and we have to apply those laws. We have the best experts also. So, we shall allow development without any adverse affect on the environment. So, where is the dispute? I hope you agree on this so that balance is there.....*(Interruptions)*. I did not say all people. I said some of the people are extremely development-oriented and some of them are extremely oriented towards environment protection. I say, I am in the middle because. I am organising harmony. We shall allow development because we are a developing country, but we shall not spoil our environment. Science and technology is being brought to play a very major role in this Ministry now.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : But it is not enough to be in the middle. You have to have the thrust on development first without affecting the environment.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : I said, I am organising harmony.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU : Sir, this is a very important question which has been raised by Shri George Fernandes

and we have not got a very clear answer from the Minister. This question pertains to environment as well as fishing. There are also traditional fishermen who have been carrying out this business. The figure of Rs. 3,000 crore as foreign exchange earning which has been quoted by the hon. Minister, has largely come from traditional fishing, not necessarily from aquaculture. How are we going to protect the environment without exempting the traditional fishermen from the rigorous provision of CRZ ? Is the Government aware that there are so many towns in coastal Maharashtra in which on the one side there is a sea and on the other side there is a creek, and all the towns lying in between are between CRZ-1 and CRZ-2 ? Is the Government thinking of exempting these towns as well as the traditional fishermen who cannot even repair their own dilapidated houses, from the rigorous provision of CRZ ? CRZ says that they cannot even reconstruct the houses. While protecting the interests of these people, is the Government also thinking of protecting the interests of these small traditional fishermen from the rigorous provision of CRZ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that as far as traditional shrimp farmers are concerned .....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURESH PRABHU : I am talking about fishermen.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Yes, it was not against the traditional fisherman about whom the Supreme Court also agreed in this judgement. So, the Bill that is coming before us, will be comprehensive, taking care of all shrimp cultivation.

As far as the people who will pollute are concerned, the polluter will pay the principal that has been established further by the hon. Supreme Court. That is already incorporated in the Bill.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU : But are you exempting the traditional fishermen from the rigorous provision of CRZ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : The Bill that will come before you has a provision that shrimp cultivation will be allowed afresh under licence that will be issued by the Ministry of Agriculture. It will be beyond 200 metres of high-tide line.

As far as people causing pollution are concerned, they will be taken care of. As far as traditional farmers are concerned, they will be protected. There is no dispute about that.

DR. ASIM BALA : Sir, the Government is earning a lot of foreign exchange from the export of prawn. But it is being threatened due to the communicable diseases to prawn. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any quarantine arrangement before exporting the prawn abroad or not. What is the arrangement for quarantine from the Ministry of Environment and Forest?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir, the guidelines already prepared and available with the Ministry of Agriculture are very comprehensive. These guidelines take care of everything like pollution etc. The quarantine is just an integral part of that. Properly graded fish or shrimp will be exported.

DR. ASIM BALA : Who is incharge of quarantine? Is it the Ministry of Environment and Forest or the Ministry of Agriculture of any other Department ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir there has been basic confusion about this. I am answering the question because it was raised to my Ministry. I am incharge of controlling pollution.

As far as cultivation is concerned which is a part of fishing, it cokes under the Ministry of Agriculture. The guidelines are from them. The guidelines take care about the quarantine.

[Translation]

Import/Export of Wheat

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*183. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity of wheat imported/exported during 1996-97 till date and likely to be imported/exported in the near future;

(b) the countries from which it is imported ;

(c) whether the Government propose to import wheat despite the bumper production of wheat;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the FCI has raised any objection regarding the quality of wheat imported;

(f) the quantity of wheat likely to be available for PDS; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to curb the import of wheat ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.